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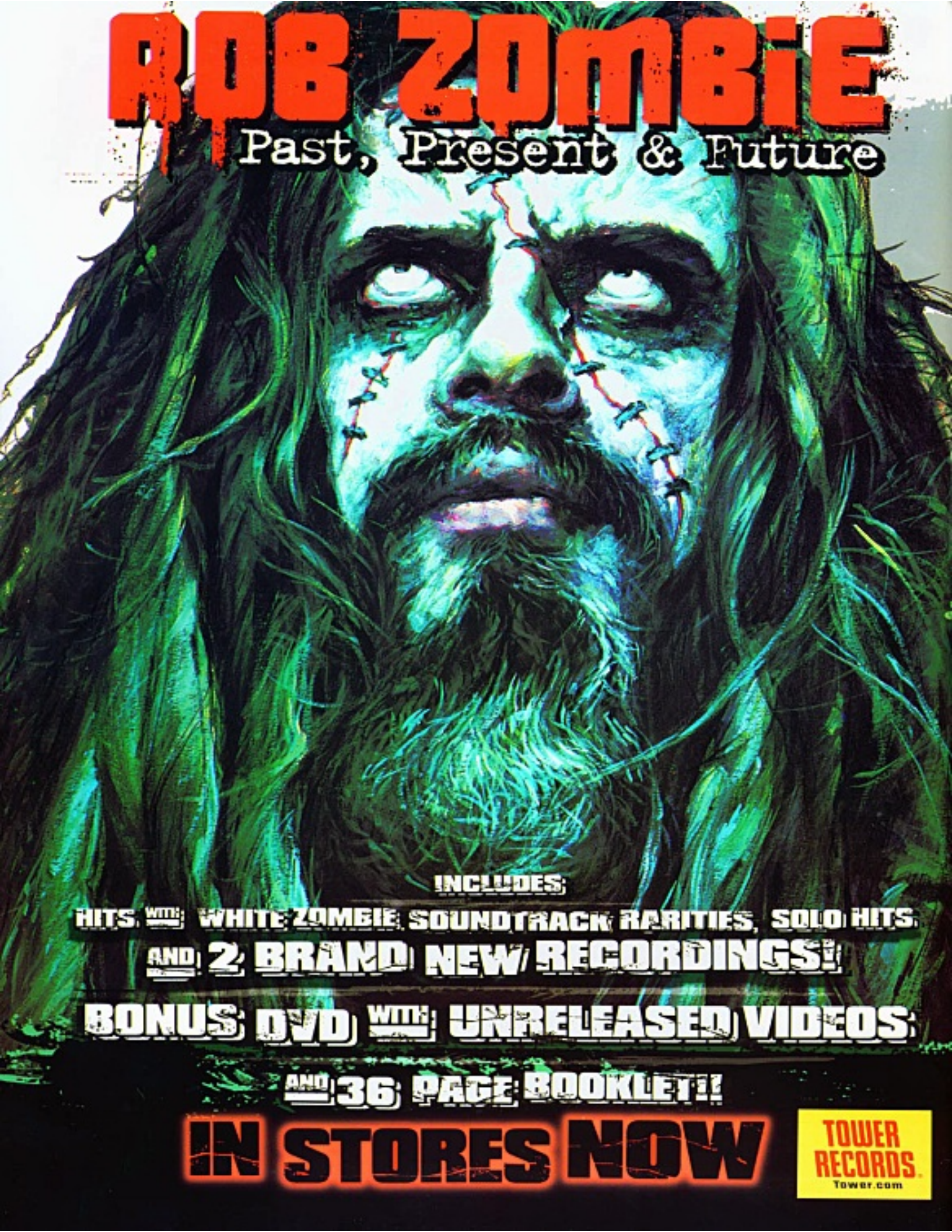
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BLOODBANK

PAGE 9 VAMPIRELLA: THE KILLING FLOOR
In stunning black and white, Vampirella stalks a cultist

PAGE 20 THE BITE LIFE
Kitana Baker steps out of the fountain to don Vampirella's scarlet threads

PAGE 22 VAMPIRELLA MUST DIE PART THE FIRST
In our first serialized tale, Vampirella and friend must combat a deadly virus

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Extraordinary writer Alan Moore contemplates writing novels, comics, poems and more

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Enter to win a Vampirella Mockingbird

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Mark Wheatley introduces Frankenstein Mobster, what he sewed together in his basement lab

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Words to live by

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We read and watch. You decide

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This Halloween, shops are haunted by a visual cacophony of new horror books

PAGE 45 HELL'S BELLS
Music to play walking the well-paved road to the underworld

PAGE 50 LUNA-CHICKS
We don't explain them, we just accept them

Photo: Lucinda Sullivan Make up: Melissa Silver Stylist: Curtis Davis Costume: Trashy, Inc.

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VAMPIRELLA
OCTOBER 2003

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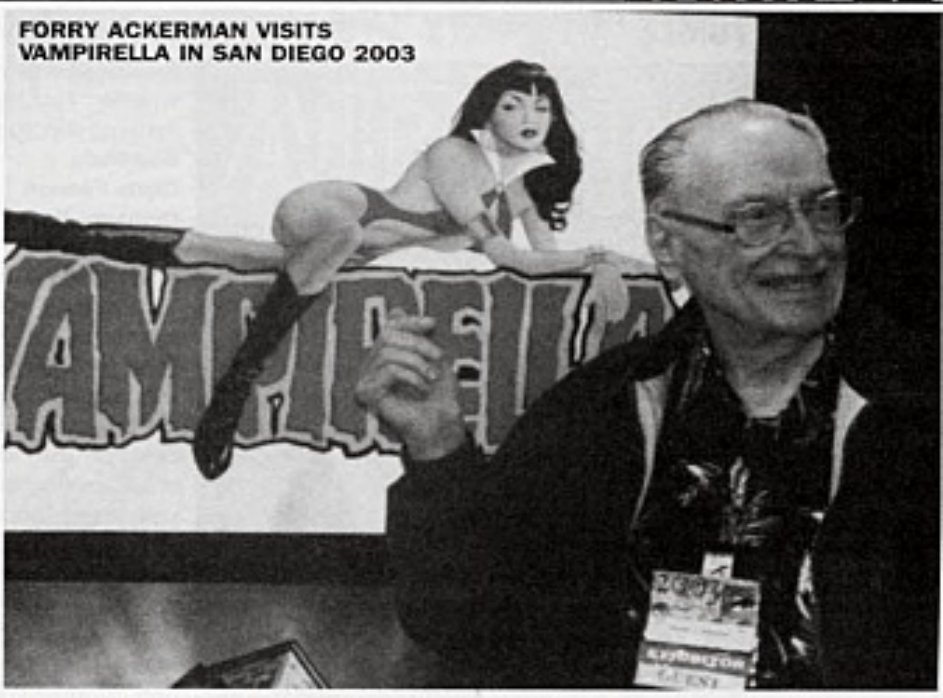
VAMPED



FORRY ACKERMAN VISITS VAMPIRELLA IN SAN DIEGO 2003

Vampirella's history is a long and storied one, beginning in the office canyons of Manhattan, flying to the outer reaches of the universe and winding its way down into the bowels of Hell.

Not the clearest path, to be sure, but one straight and true. Vampirella sprung from the minds of magazine publisher Jim Warren, genre guru Forrest J. Ackerman and artists Trina Robbins and Frank Frazetta. The original "mod-witch" idea of Warren's was transformed into a beautiful bloodsucker from another planet.

Over the years the magazine was published by Warren, she faced cultists, werewolves, aliens, Dracula, and even Hollywood agents, and she always managed to pull through. Sagging sales and the change of the sequential art marketplace pushed the black and white magazine off newsstands and into hiding.

When the character changed hands, Harris Publications took up the run of comics. That market was in a slow growth period and a character as classic as Vampirella had a special place within it. Older fans remembered fondly the stories and art of Archie Goodwin, Jose Gonzalez, Tom Sutton, Wally Wood, Bill DuBay and others. And younger fans were turned on by the hot chick in the red bathing suit.

A bad girl boom in the 1990s helped spur Vampirella to the front of the foray, followed closely by characters obviously inspired by her.

The market swayed and sagged, grew and groaned, but Vampirella hung in there. And continues to hang in there.

The comics industry has changed, and so those who participate in it must consider change and we saw this change to be good.

We're still going to be introducing you to Vampriella in many different ways – through artists and writers who are working on some of the big industry projects, through our model, Kitana Baker, and through some regular people who see Vampirella as something more than just a comics character. We're also going to showcase horror in an exciting way, showing you facets of that genre that are stunning, and the talent that goes into that. We're also going to delve into the comics industry, meeting people who are doing amazing work, and we'll watch comics translate from medium to medium as this small portion of the entertainment industry instigates great permutations in the bigger whole.

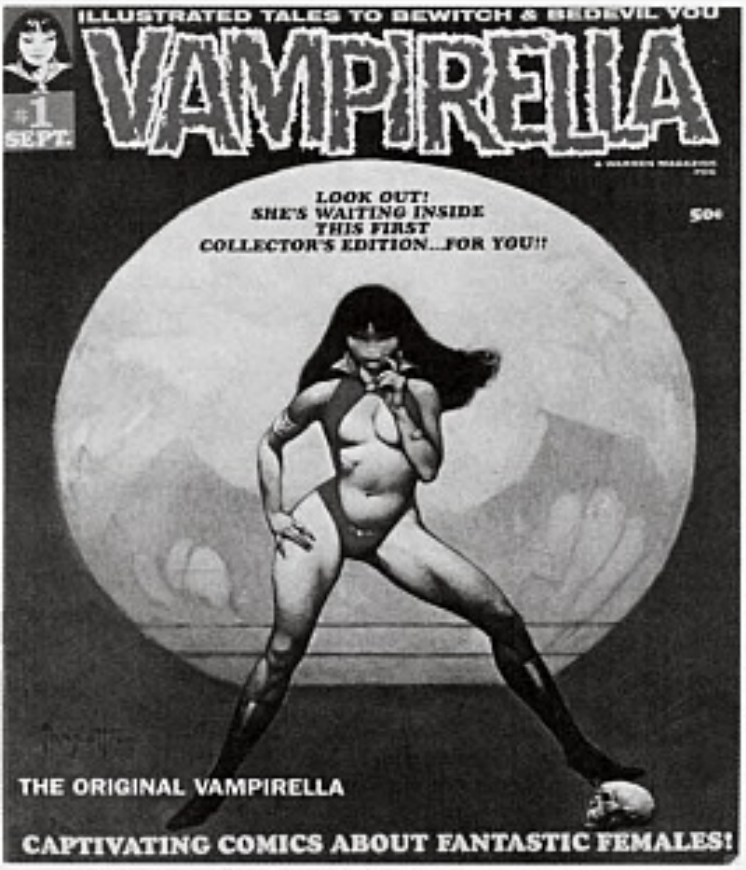
We said it a few times during the announcement of this magazine: Classic Style and Modern Sensibility. It's a pleasure to be able to take a page out of the old playbook and mix it with some new ideas, some new twists.

We hope you enjoy VAMPIRELLA COMICS MAGAZINE as much as we enjoyed putting it together. Let us know what you think, what else you want to see, where else we can take Vampirella on her continuing path.

Maureen McTigue
Editor-in-Chief
September 2003

SCARLET LETTERS

TITILATING TOMES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#1 SEPT.
VAMPIRELLA
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THE ORIGINAL VAMPIRELLA
CAPTIVATING COMICS ABOUT FANTASTIC FEMALES!

As word got out to fans far and wide, reactions started to trickle in. And we're happy to report that the reactions were positive. If you have something to say, say it! Mail letters to Scarlet Letters, Vampirella Comics Magazine, 1115 Broadway, 8th Floor, New York, NY 10010. Email to comics@harris-pub.com.

DEAR VAMPIRELLA MAGAZINE PEOPLE:

When I heard you guys were bringing back the Vampirella Magazine I screamed out loud "Wonderful!" One of the first comics I ever picked up was Vampirella #1. (I guess I've just shown how old I am!) But seriously, as a youngster Vampirella stood out as one of the most refreshing and exciting characters to hit the newsstand. No one, not even Dr. Strange, had adventures as wild and scary and magical as hers. And, of course, no one could ever look so good!

I'll admit I wasn't a big fan when she went to comics. She lost a little bit of her specialness. Now she was in the same boat as every other superhero out there. There was something neat about reading comics from a magazine though. It just felt bigger and more substantial, I guess.

Now a whole new generation of comics readers can experience what I did years ago. It's sure to be a treat. They don't know what they've been missing!

Thanks for listening and keep up the good work!

Sincerely,
Clyde Fannon
Chicago, IL

TO THE EDITORS:

Vampirella's back! Yay! I'd lost hope and thought her gone forever but she's back with style and grace in a new yet traditional style reminiscent of the Warren days. Were getting 48 pages of Vampirella goodness. I LOVE IT. Short stories, articles and interviews: what else could a Vampirella fan want? Oh and I can't leave out Kitana Baker! What a hottie!! After seeing her kicking ass in those Miller Lite catfights I am convinced that she is a perfect Vampirella. (If there's a movie she'd be perfect for the role!)

Well, that being said, ALL Vampirella fans new and old check this magazine out!

Vicious Vincent
San Francisco, CA

HI THERE!

Hey, I just love Vampi; she's so sexy and a real hottie! At the same time, she means business! I saw her photos and I know she is the oldest comics bad girl to date, still going strong.

I saw her website and saw this contest, so I tried it. I know it's a little rough but you must have got the idea. Took out some time to do this sketch from my busy schedule cause I love her!

Rohit Thakur
New Dehli, India

And check out Rohit's drawing to the right. Not too shabby at all.

We love this kinda stuff and encourage all of you to send your sketches to us. We want to hear from all of you and know what you have to say.

Scarlet Letters is your forum. Speak your mind and spread the word.

RECOMMENDED READING:

"Blankets" by Craig Thompson. Honest, personal and lyrical, Thompson's semi-autobiographical illustrated novel showcases what the comics medium is capable of. It touches the heart in ways not much else has. Top Shelf Productions.

"Runaways" by Brian Vaughan and Adrian Alphona. Their parents are super-villains, and these kids discover the bad side of it. They hit the road; on the run from their own parents, discovering their own powers on the go. Vaughan is one of those writers who can hit the mark every time out. Marvel Comics.

"Wildguard" by Todd Nauck. It's about time. Superheroes as reality TV stars? You bet! And readers get to pick who stays on board. Nauck's kinetic drawing style is perfect for this story, and better since he created it. www.wildguard.com. Image Comics.

Steve Niles. Niles took his love of horror and turned himself into a swirling vortex of genre stories. From his own Cal McDonald mysteries in comics or novels, to his ground-breaking *30 Days of Night* with artist Ben Tempelsmith to his reworking of the Frankenstein story in *Wake the Dead*, Niles has almost single-handedly reawakened horror in comics. Dark Horse Comics. IDW Publishing.
(1-888-COMICBOOK for specialty retailers)

"I just love Vampi!"

SCARLET LETTERS, VAMPIRELLA COMICS MAGAZINE, 1115 BROADWAY, 8TH FLOOR, NEW YORK, NY 10010. EMAIL TO COMICS@HARRIS-PUB.COM

INTERESTING PLACE TO MEET. IS THIS A HOBBY OF YOURS?
HELL, NO. WE'RE HERE TO TALK TO THE GUY IN THE PLAID.
HIS BIRD IS LOSING.
NOTHING NEW THERE VAMPIRELLA. IT'S WHY I COULD BUY HIM OFF.
DIDN'T I ASK YOU TO WEAR SOMETHING UNOBTRUSIVE?
WHEN I WISH TO PASS UNNOTICED, I DO.
RIGHT. SO AS SOON AS THIS FIGHT'S OVER, MY BOY TELLS US WHERE TO FIND THIS CULT AND I LET YOU COME ON THE INVESTIGATION.
YOU GONNA KEEP UP YOUR END OF THE DEAL?
OH, THIS IS ABSURD.
YOU WANT MY HELP OR NOT, V?
FINE. YES.
YES, WHAT?
YES, DERRICK, I'LL GO OUT TO DINNER WITH YOU.
GREAT! CHUY, TELL THE LADY WHERE THIS CULT IS HOLED UP.
POOR, POOR BOY. I WISH...
C'MON, CHUY, IT STINKS OUT HERE.
WELL PUT A CLOTHESPIN ON...

VAMPIRELLA

the killing floor

written and illustrated by Steve Lieber

WE'RE ON DARK LAND HERE. BLOODS POURED INTO THESE PITTED ACRES FOR A THOUSAND YEARS.
JESUS. HOW DO YOU KNOW THAT?
A POWERFUL PLACE MAKES ITS NATURE KNOWN.

THIS FELLOW, FOR INSTANCE, WILL TELL US WHERE TO FIND THE CULT AND ITS LEADER.
LADY, I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT HERE OR WHAT YOU THINK YOU'RE DOING BUT... YOU...
YOU CAN...
...YOU CAN JUST
YUUUUUUHH...
YOU CAN TAKE THE STAIRS DOWN THERE, PAST THE STEWARD'S OFFICE.
THANK YOU. NOW FORGET.
V. I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT YOU'RE HOPING TO ACCOMPLISH...
...BUT YOU SURE MAKE IT LOOK EASY.
KILLING FLOOR

UUGH. WHEN MY CLIENT'S HIRED ME TO CHECK ON THE WEIRDOS THEIR DAUGHTER RAN OFF WITH, I HAD NO IDEA IT'D LEAD TO THIS.

I RAN DELIVERIES TO ONE OF THESE PLACES WHEN I WAS A KID. I REMEMBER THE COLD AND THE STINK AND THE FLIES, BUT THIS IS A THOUSAND TIMES WORSE.
A PROPER SLAUGHTERHOUSE TRIES TO MITIGATE SUCH AN ATMOSPHERE.
HERE, THEY CULTIVATE IT.

LOOK AT THAT LEER. TEN DEGREES WARMER AND HE'D BUY THAT MEAT A WIG.

Y'KNOW, I CAN'T WAIT TO TAKE YOU OUT TO DINNER.
SPEAKING OF THE COLD, HOW COME I CAN'T SEE YOUR BREATH?
YOU WOULDN'T WANT TO.
TRUST ME.

YOU THINK YOU'RE GONNA NEED THAT?
Hush!
CASE OF FIRE
I WANT YOU TO REMEMBER HOW SIMPLE IT IS.

A SIGN IN THE BLOOD, OUR WILL BE DONE.

CHILDREN, WE'RE GATHERED HERE BENEATH THE KILLING FLOOR TO PERFORM AN ACT OF WILL.
THIS TRAY IS FILLED BY THE CHARNEL HOUSE ABOVE.
A CEASELESS GORY STREAM SUPPORTS OUR CAUSE.

A SIGN IN THE BLOOD, OUR WILL BE DONE.
OUR LEADER LIES DEAD BEFORE US. OUR TECHNIQUES HAVE PRESERVED HIM. OUR SIGNS WILL RESTORE HIM.

WE'LL FOLLOW HIM TO GREATNESS AND INEXHAUSTIBLE POWER, OUR ARMIES MARCHING ON A ROAD OF BONE. NO ONE WILL STOP US, THOUGH THEY'LL CERTAINLY TRY.

A SIGN IN THE BLOOD.

OUR WILL BE DONE!

YOU LUCKY TWO WILL WITNESS THE FIRST MOMENTS OF OUR REIGN. AND THEN YOU'LL DIE AND FILL OUR SANGUINARY PLATTER.
MAGICAL FLAME. I CAN'T CROSS IT.
KEEP... KEEP CALM, V. I'LL GET YOU OUT OF THIS.
YES. YOU WILL. I'M SORRY, DERRICK.
USE YOUR BODY TO BREAK THE CIRCLE. EXTINGUISH A SEGMENT OF THE FLAME WITH YOUR HANDS AND ARMS.
WRAP YOUR HANDS IN YOUR COAT.
DON'T LET YOUR SCREAMS BE HEARD.
THE FIRST SIGN WILL REVIVE HIS HEART.
...rrrrgghh...
THE SECOND WILL RESTORE HIS BREATH, AND SET HIS TRIPES TO CHURNING.
nnnnuuhh...
fire's...
almost...
:nngh:
THE THIRD AND FINAL SIGN
out!..
SIR! SHE'S

THE THIRD WILL MARK YOUR SORDID END, AS THOSE YOU SOUGHT TO LEAD RETREAT IN HORROR.

THE SPELL IS COMPLETE! WHY DOESN'T HE RISE?

WHERE DID THE POWER GO?

OH, NO. NOT THIS. WE'VE LABORED FOR DECADES.

NOT FOR THIS!

DERRICK, COME HERE!

WE'LL HAVE TO FIGHT OUR WAY OUT.

I CAN'T KEEP GOING. SAVE YOURSELF.
SHUT UP AND HOLD ON!

COVER YOUR FACE!
OH MY GOD! WHAT--?

I'M SAVING YOU.
WHAT'S HAPPENING?

"SO WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN, V ?"
"THE SLAUGHTERHOUSE WILL BE RAZED AND THE LAND WILL BE PUT TO HONEST USE BY SOME NEW, LESS LOATHSOME BUSINESS."
Tendale Farms
POULTRY PROCESSING
"THE CULTISTS WILL STRUGGLE TO REASSEMBLE THEIR SHATTERED LIVES. AFTER YEARS AS MINDLESS THRALLS SERVING A MONSTROUS LORD, THEY'RE FREE. WHO CAN SAY WHAT LIES AHEAD?"
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"AND THE COWS? THEIR RAGE WILL PASS AND THEY'LL REVERT TO TYPE, JOINING HERDS IF THEY CAN, GRAZING THE FIELDS BY NIGHT UNTIL THEIR BONES COLLAPSE."
"AND WHAT ABOUT US ?"
THERE IS NO "US" DERRICK. YOU KNOW THAT.
BUT WE'LL HAVE THIS LOVELY DINNER. JUST A SALAD PLEASE.
SAME HERE.
VERY GOOD SIR.
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VAMPIRELLA
Take A Bite
MILLER LITE'S CATFIGHTER
GETS A TASTE OF VAMPIRELLA

THE NEWEST FACE OF VAMPIRELLA KITANA BAKER LOVES THE BITE LIFE.

This past summer, Vampirella transformed. From comic book to magazine, from one face to another.

The newest face of Vampirella is one that may be familiar to anyone who watches television. She made a splash last January in the Super Bowl commercial for Miller Lite, as one of two women who just couldn't agree on the beer. The "Catfight" spot created a sensation, and the young model's recognition took off.

And now Kitana Baker is jetting off around the world (for Miller), or getting interviewed on all manner of TV shows ("The View"), hosting her own website (www.kitanabaker.com) or taking the movie industry by storm (she's getting warmed up, but check out "The Scorpion King").

We grabbed her for a few moments before yet another trip and got a few interesting answers out of her.

VAMP MAG: *You're a pretty active gal, traveling here and there. What do you do to relax? Or, do you even bother to relax?*

KITANA BAKER: These days I really don't get much time off, but if I'm lucky enough to have a few hours of down time, I spend it sitting on my couch and watching TV.

VM: *From other interviews, you've noted that you're a big snowborder. What do you like about it?*

KB: I started snowboarding when I was pretty young, but I haven't had an opportunity to go for the last couple of years. I think I enjoy the adrenaline and the freedom of speeding down the slopes most.

VM: *With all your globetrotting for Miller, what's been a highlight?*

KB: I'd have to say a highlight for me was going to Bosnia to visit the troops for Fourth of July weekend. It made me appreciate our troops and our country even more.

VM: *Your Miller Lite commercial was a pretty big hit (to say the least). The hype and the reactions (both positive & negative) notwithstanding, what do you think of the commercial?*

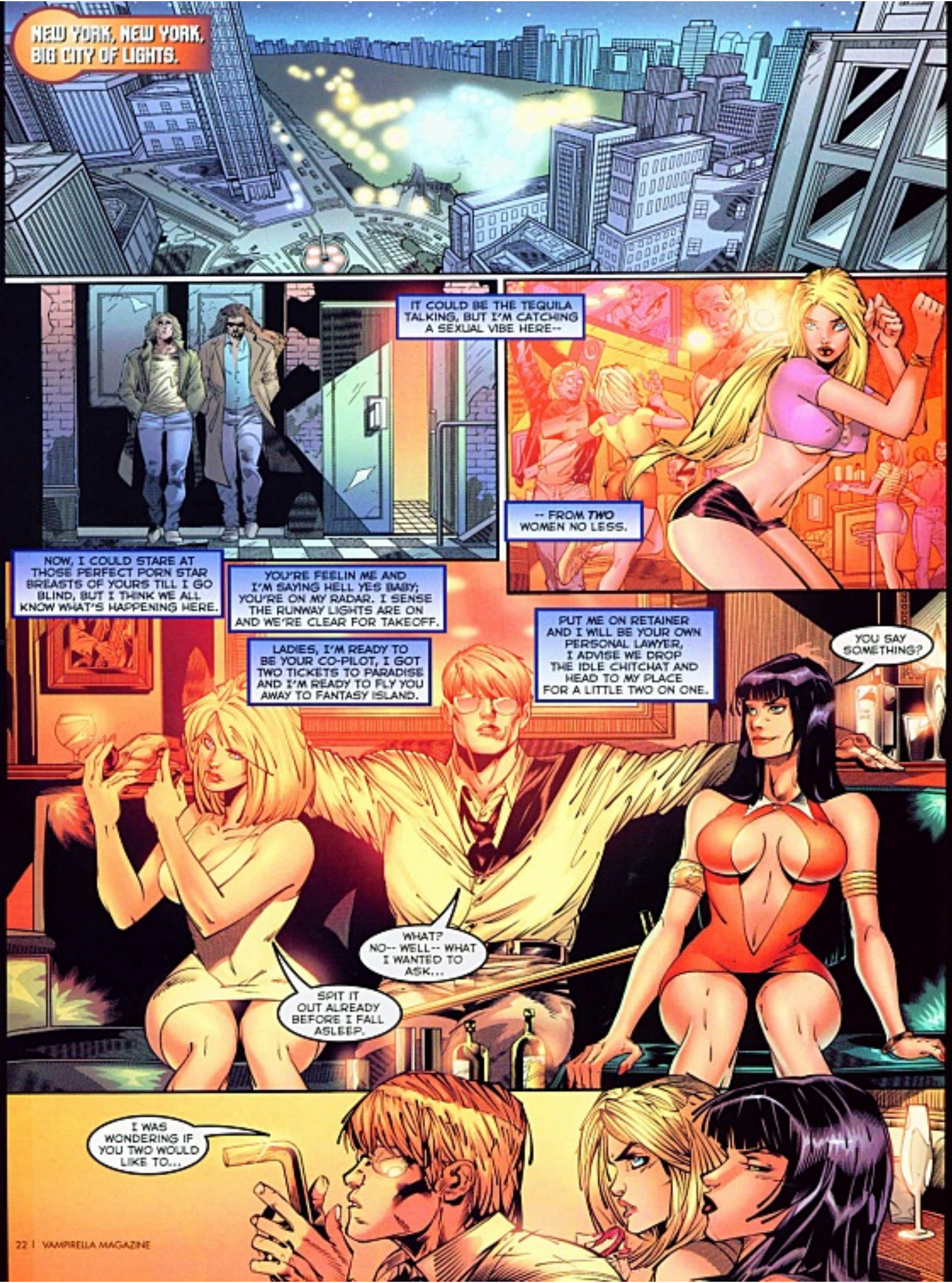
KB: I personally find them extremely funny. The whole premise of the commercials is the guys sitting at a bar discussing what they think would make a great commercial. If anything, they poke fun at how men think, which we all know can be pretty funny at times.

VM: *So, now you're also Vampirella, a strong, sexy woman, just like yourself. Whaddya think of her?*

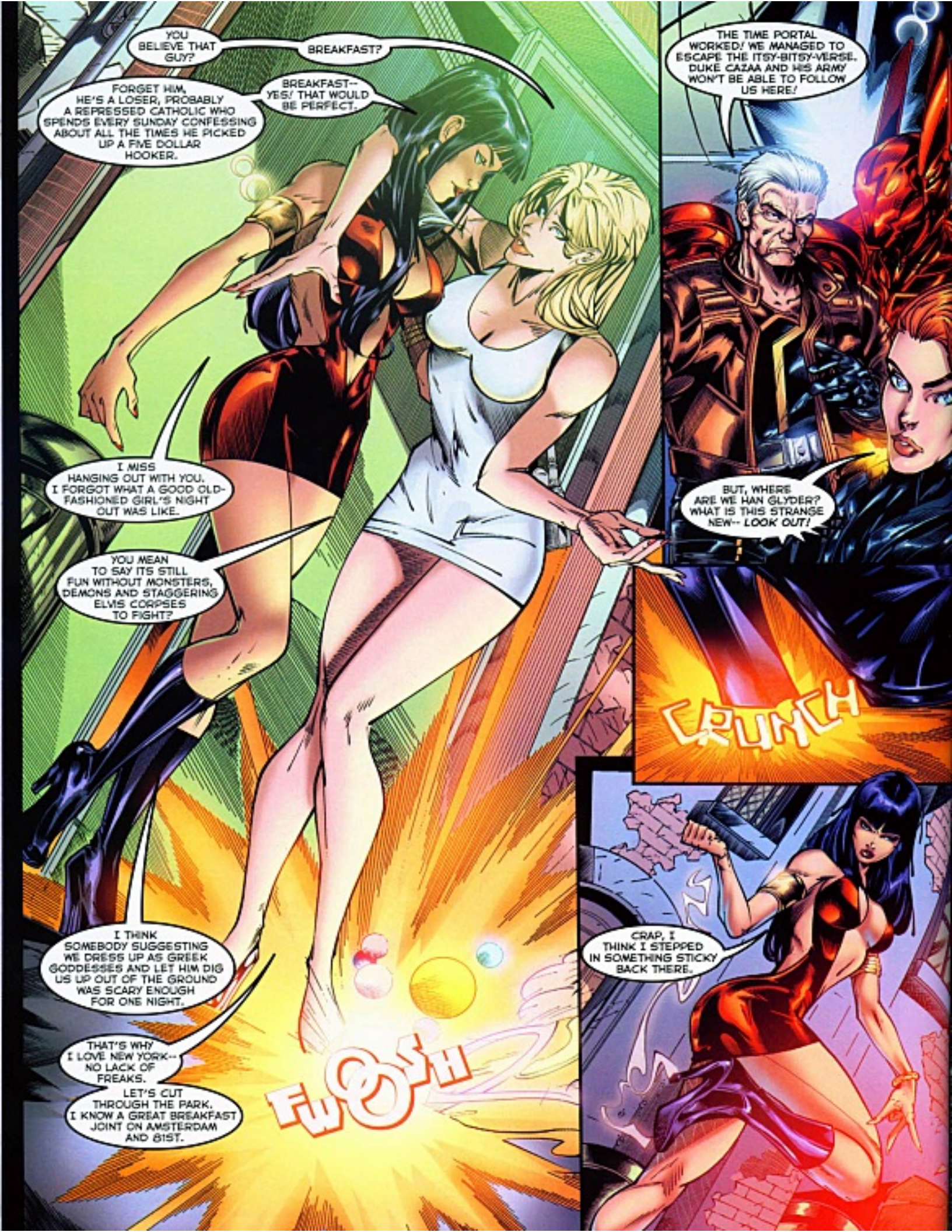
KB: I think it's great to be the new Vampirella. I like a woman who knows how to take charge!

VM: *During the photo shoot, you told a story about a car and a reaction to you. Can you tell it here for the fans?*

KB: Oh yes, I had forgotten about this. I was at a gas station near my home and a car of young men, I'd say early 20's, pulled up and asked if I was Kitana. I told them yes and they asked for some autographs. As they were pulling away, I guess they were trying to show off or something, they were driving extremely fast and ended up hitting a post and dented the back of the car. It looked like a brand new car, but I guess they were too embarrassed to check out the damage, so they just drove off.


NEW YORK, NEW YORK, BIG CITY OF LIGHTS.
IT COULD BE THE TEQUILA TALKING, BUT I'M CATCHING A SEXUAL VIBE HERE--
-- FROM TWO WOMEN NO LESS.
NOW, I COULD STARE AT THOSE PERFECT PORN STAR BREASTS OF YOURS TILL I GO BLIND, BUT I THINK WE ALL KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING HERE.
YOU'RE FEELIN ME AND I'M SAYING HELL YES BABY; YOU'RE ON MY RADAR. I SENSE THE RUNWAY LIGHTS ARE ON AND WE'RE CLEAR FOR TAKEOFF.
LADIES, I'M READY TO BE YOUR CO-PILOT, I GOT TWO TICKETS TO PARADISE AND I'M READY TO FLY YOU AWAY TO FANTASY ISLAND.
PUT ME ON RETAINER AND I WILL BE YOUR OWN PERSONAL LAWYER, I ADVISE WE DROP THE IDLE CHITCHAT AND HEAD TO MY PLACE FOR A LITTLE TWO ON ONE.
YOU SAY SOMETHING?
WHAT? NO-- WELL-- WHAT I WANTED TO ASK...
SPIT IT OUT ALREADY BEFORE I FALL ASLEEP.
I WAS WONDERING IF YOU TWO WOULD LIKE TO...

MAYBE YOU AND YOUR PERVERT LAW PARTNER COULD HELP EACH OTHER RUB ONE OUT IN THE SHOWER.
WE THINK HE NEEDS SOME HELP... THE PROFESSIONAL KIND.
LETS FACE IT TINA, LAWYERS ARE BIGGER BLOOD-SUCKERS THAN VAMPIRES.
VAMPIRELLA MUST DIE
part 1 of the definitive infinity virus
WRITTEN BY JIMMY PALMIOTTI AND JUSTIN GRAY
PENCILLER GABRIEL REARTE INKER METH
COLORIST RAYMOND LEE LETTERS MICHAEL CONLEY
MARK, WHAT DID YOU SAY TO THEM?
I'M NOT THE VILLAIN.
WHAT THE HELL ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
YOU TOLD THEM YOU SLEEP IN AN ISOLATION TANK DIDN'T YOU? I TOLD YOU THAT FREAK'S CHICKS OUT MAN!
WHATEVER. LETS JUST SWING BY THE WIDOW MOTEL AND PICK UP SOME RUSSIAN HOOKERS.


YOU BELIEVE THAT GUY?
BREAKFAST?
FORGET HIM, HE'S A LOSER, PROBABLY A REPRESSED CATHOLIC WHO SPENDS EVERY SUNDAY CONFESSING ABOUT ALL THE TIMES HE PICKED UP A FIVE DOLLAR HOOKER.
BREAKFAST-- YES! THAT WOULD BE PERFECT.
I MISS HANGING OUT WITH YOU. I FORGOT WHAT A GOOD OLD-FASHIONED GIRL'S NIGHT OUT WAS LIKE.
YOU MEAN TO SAY ITS STILL FUN WITHOUT MONSTERS, DEMONS AND STAGGERING ELVIS CORPSES TO FIGHT?
I THINK SOMEBODY SUGGESTING WE DRESS UP AS GREEK GODDESSES AND LET HIM DIG US UP OUT OF THE GROUND WAS SCARY ENOUGH FOR ONE NIGHT.
THAT'S WHY I LOVE NEW YORK-- NO LACK OF FREAKS.
LET'S CUT THROUGH THE PARK. I KNOW A GREAT BREAKFAST JOINT ON AMSTERDAM AND 81ST.
FWOOSH
THE TIME PORTAL WORKED! WE MANAGED TO ESCAPE THE ITSY-BITSY-VERSE. DUKE CAZAA AND HIS ARMY WON'T BE ABLE TO FOLLOW US HERE!
BUT, WHERE ARE WE HAN GLYDER? WHAT IS THIS STRANGE NEW-- LOOK OUT!
CRUNCH
CRAP, I THINK I STEPPED IN SOMETHING STICKY BACK THERE.

SO HOW IS THE WHOLE MONSTER FIGHTING THING GOING?
OH, YOU KNOW, LOTS OF PUNCHING AND KICKING, RITUALS, AMULETS, BLOOD GORE, MAFIA VAMPIRE DAUGHTERS, MEXICAN ZOMBIES, WEREWOLF COPS, AND THE OCCASIONAL HALF-NAKED DEMIGOD TO PUT DOWN.
MY LIFE SEEMS SO BORING.
YEA, MINE TOO.
RIIIIGHT. I MEAN I'M SURE HALF-NAKED DEMIGODS ARE ON SALE AT THE DOLLAR STORE.
SERIOUSLY, IT GETS BORING FIGHTING SOME VARIATION OF AN UNDEAD BEASTIE LOOKING TO TURN THE WORLD INTO HELL OVER AND OVER--
IT GRATES ON THE NERVES AS WELL AS MAKING IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND AND MAINTAIN A STEADY RELATIONSHIP.
EVIL, FEATURING THE UNIMAGINATIVE HORDES OF HELL. BELIEVE ME, STILL NOT BORING TO US BRIDGE AND TUNNEL GIRLS.
HEY COME ON-- THIS IS NEW YORK. YOU HAVE A BAZILLION STUDLY SUPERHEROES RUNNING AROUND. YOU EVER MEET ANY OF THEM?
I DATED ONE FOR A WHILE. LONG STORY.
THAT SHOWS YOU HOW HARD IT IS TO FIND A DECENT MAN IN THIS TOWN.
SPILL IT, WHO WAS HE?
I CAN'T TELL YOU, HE MADE ME SIGN A CONTRACT BEFORE OUR FIRST DATE.
HE DIDN'T WANT ME SELLING THE BOOK RIGHTS OR BLABBING ON TV ABOUT HIS-- UH, LETS JUST SAY, INADEQUATE PACKAGE AND HIS QUICK DELIVERY SERVICE.

NOT ONLY THAT, BUT HE WAS INSECURE ABOUT EVERYTHING, ESPECIALLY HIS COSTUME.
TURNS OUT HE WAS GAY, AND DOESN'T THAT MAKE SENSE WHAT WITH THE RUNNING AROUND AFTER MIDNIGHT IN A CAPE WITH AN UNDERAGE SIDEKICK.
HE WANTED TO BE SURE BEFORE HE MADE THE LIFESTYLE COMMITMENT.
YOU WERE THE STRAIGHT TEST.
YEA, IT'S THE SORT OF THING THAT MAKES A GIRL FEEL SPECIAL. WHAT ABOUT YOU?
OH YOU KNOW, THE OCCASIONAL RITUALISTIC ORGY, BUT NOTHING SERIOUS.
HEY YOU SEE THAT?
WHAT IS IT?
LOOKS LIKE A...
SPACESHIP?

HOLY S---

HEY, UMMM, VAMPI, THEY COULD BE HOSTILE OR LIKE GIANT OCTOTHINGIES LOOKING TO TAKE OVER OUR WORLD.
NEVER RULE OUT THE CHANCE IT MIGHT BE A SHIP FULL OF SWIMSUIT MODELS FROM AN ALL MALE PLANET OUT CRUISING THE GALAXY FOR AVAILABLE WOMEN.
DIDN'T THINK OF IT THAT WAY.
HELLO? ANYONE HOME?
AND YOU TOLD ME YOUR LIFE WAS BORING.
DAMN, THAT'S NO SWIMSUIT MODEL.
MUST BE FROM THE PLANET OF BAD HORRIBLE FASHION SENSE AND LAME ACCESSORIES.
IS IT DEAD?
HE IS HURT.
COME ON, WAKE UP BUDDY.
I'VE... DIED AND... GONE TO THE MOONS OF MERCADOR...

YOU'RE NOT DEAD. YOU CRASHED ON EARTH. CENTRAL PARK TO BE SPECIFIC.
EARTH? PRAISE THE COSMIC DEITY I MADE IT-- THERE ISN'T MUCH TIME-- MUST HELP--
EASY GUY, WE NEED TO GET YOU TO A DOCTOR, OR MAYBE A VETERINARIAN.
NO, MY LIFE IS OVER, BUT THERE IS STILL HOPE FOR YOU AND YOUR WORLD.
THE ANTIDOTE, WHERE IS IT?
IT'S NOT OVER HERE!
NO! THE ANTIDOTE RUINED! ALL IS LOST.
DON'T CRY. LOOK THERE'S ONE LEFT.
LISTEN TO ME, THAT'S ONLY ENOUGH FOR ONE. ALL WILL BE LOST UNLESS YOU CAN DUPLICATE THAT SERUM.
YOU MUST FIND THE EARTH HEROES KNOWN AS DYNAMIC FORCE AND GET THEIR HELP! THEY ALL MUST BE INJECTED OR YOUR PLANET IS DOOMED.

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
THE EARTH NEEDS YOUR HELP--
I AM FROM A WORLD CALLED GAGEXANLAMLAN, YOUR HEROES FOUGHT IN A SECRET BATTLE AGAINST THE COSMIC OVERLOOKER CALLED KIRBEX THE TERRIBLE.
THE DYNAMIC FORCE DEFEATED THE OVERLOOKER AND SAVED THE UNIVERSE, BUT WHILE ON MY WORLD THEY WERE EXPOSED TO THE DEFINITIVE INFINITY VIRUS.
IF UNTREATED THE VIRUS CAUSES INSANITY, VIOLENT RAGES AND AN UNCOMFORTABLE, BUT MILD RASH.
IF THE HEROES DO NOT RECEIVE THE ANTIDOTE IN--
TWENTY-FOUR HOURS, THEIR MADNESS WILL BECOME UNSTOPPABLE AND THEY WILL TEAR YOUR WORLD APART.
HAPPENS ALL THE TIME WHERE I'M FROM. RATHER UNPLEASANT BUSINESS, BELIEVE ME.
YOU... MUST... SAVE... GHUGH!--
EWW!
PRETTY GROSS. WELL TINA, WANNA SAVE THE WORLD?
I HAVE NOTHING TO DO TILL TUESDAY-- REMEMBER; IT'S A 3-DAY WEEKEND.
OK, THEN WHO ARE THE MEMBERS OF DYNAMIC FORCE?
LETS SEE, THERE'S PROFESSOR RX, REALLY BIG GUY, THE RETALIATOR, POLECAT, WEATHER VIXEN AND...

A FEW HOURS LATER
AT THE DAILY TRUMPET, PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT FOR NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER DRVEY DRIVER, SECRETLY KNOWN AS THE--
DUNG BEETLE!?! GODDAMMIT, DRIVER, YOU HALFWIT MORON! YOU'VE BEEN MISSING FOR A WEEK!
YOU SHOW UP THIS MORNING WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S NOTE AND BRING ME THIS SHIT? MORE SNAPSHOTS OF THAT MENACE DUNG BEETLE FIGHTING THE CARNO-BIRD-MAN!?!
A GODDAMN SPACE SHIP JUST CRASH-LANDED IN CENTRAL PARK! THAT'S WHAT PEOPLE WANT TO SEE! WHERE ARE MY PHOTOS?
BUT, MR. TOMROY, I DON'T FEEL SO SWELL AND THE FEDS SEALED OFF THE CRASH SITE...
WHAT AM I PAYING YOU FOR? JESUS CHRIST DRIVER YOU'RE AS USELESS AS TITS ON A NUN!
IF I HAD A DOLLAR FOR EVERY LAME EXCUSE YOU STROLLED INTO MY OFFICE WITH--
YOU KNOW WHAT?
I'M SICK OF LISTENING TO YOU.
TO BE CONTINUED NEXT ISSUE.

THE VOICE

ALAN MOORE BURNS HIS WAY THROUGH HISTORY, REFINES RETIREMENT AND SPEAKS FOR "THE VOICE OF THE FIRE"

INTERVIEW BY MAUREEN MCTIGUE ALL PHOTOGRAPHIC ART BY JOSÉ VILLARRUBIA

Listening to Alan Moore talk about the details that went into creating *Voice of the Fire*, his newest project (for American audiences from Top Shelf Productions. The book first saw print in the UK in 1996), reminds one of a university class, and sitting back and getting a lesson in anthropology. The book is layer upon layer of history, like an archeological dig, where you have some idea of what to expect but you don't know what you'll find until you get there.

The novel *Voice of the Fire* is a series of stories that tell one story, one about Northampton, England, Moore's hometown. The way the history surrounding the town is pieced together by the author intertwines each era in a way that defies the expected, as anyone who has read Moore's comics work would expect, but don't expect *Watchmen*.

The first chapter, "Hob's Hog," is an interesting exploration of storytelling. Taking the time period into consideration, Moore deliberately narrows the voice to first person, present tense, and it isn't easy to read.

Moore explains: "From what I've been told by people who read it, some people found it incredibly difficult, some people gave up halfway through but people who did, once they got a few pages in, they could almost hear the voice of the caveman in their heads and it all became a lot more lucid.

"It's like everything to him is a very big deal, the idea of written language and the whole kind of emerging Neolithic technology that is completely unfamiliar to him. It was quite difficult to get into the protagonist of 'Hob's Hog'. Once I created the voice, once I got the language, then I got an idea of how the character would have thought and it kind of wrote itself from there really.

"I was looking at various sources upon to base an aboriginal voice. I found out that one of the features of aboriginal language is that they had only one tense, that they have a kind of past and future that are subsumed within the present. It seemed to indicate a much more immediate world view."

And that world view has been built upon, each stage leading to the next. "I'm a great believer in the idea that we actually need to have language before we have consciousness, apparently we need a word, whether that's a sound or a symbol for something before we've even got a concept for it.

"If you're taking the Neolithic period, it's on a much more fundamental level. He has no word for 'lie' so he has no concept of a lie. Words themselves are much more frightening things to him. When he comes upon a stone with markings on it early in the book, he closes his eyes and walks around it so he doesn't have to look at it. I imagine, in its earliest days, writing would have been seen as something incredibly supernatural. People who had the skill would have had supernatural powers.

"Because this is a book about Northampton, I figured that this first story would have to be about how the whole idea of place started. I mean, in purely material

terms what happens with Northampton, we had an ancient Neolithic tract, a natural tract, that ran from Lincoln to Glastonbury, called the Jurassic Way and it was one of the earliest natural tracts that could get you from one end of the country to another. The big problem back then would have been that there were no maps, the concept of maps didn't exist so, again, I started looking at aboriginal cultures and I started thinking about the aboriginal song lines. It struck me that this would be the earliest most obvious form of a map, that a pneumonic device such as a song that rhymed, people would soon learn. So if you wrote a very, very long multi-stanza memorable song that simply told you about the land markers you would see as you progressed along the path then you would have created a kind of pneumonic map that people could use to navigate from Glastonbury to Lincoln.

"It struck me as something of what song lines were. I mean, obviously they have a sacred function that in my opinion most sacred functions tend to underlie practical considerations and so I get this native witch-doctor who was trying to fix his place's identity with the creation of this magical song line that would somehow instill this area that he lived in with an identity that people would remember and be drawn to, and to empower this act with a human sacrifice. I've read an awful lot of books that suggest that maybe the whole of culture is based upon human sacrifice."

The story behind the story of Chapter 1, "Hob's Hog" is as detailed as the chapter itself. A reader should not be discouraged by the simplicity and difficulty of that chapter since the time periods progress and grow just like the world did, and allows the voice of the fire to be heard.

"Well, some of this book is cryptic even to me," Moore laughs. His laugh is a low chuckle, one that quickly acknowledges the absurdity of things, yet affirms his own position. He continues to reveal his story. "When I decided that I wanted to write a book about Northampton, I was looking at the basic character of Northampton overall. Looking at the whole history of the place and it seemed to me, fire always had a large part to play in the history of the town. We were burning most of the forests during, say the first chapter, the environmental carnage we wreaked during the Neolithic period even today's big business would be hard pressed to equal, when it came to chopping down forests, we were setting fire to them and clearing the ground that way.

"By the time we reached the Bronze Age [Chapter 2, "The Cremation Fields"] we'd started cremating our dead, in fact, in Northampton, the current crematorium is within a mile and a half of the original Bronze Age cremation fields.

"The fact that the Gunpowder Plotters came from here, who tried to blow up the House of Parliament [Guy Fawkes and the Catholic conspirators], who were themselves burned, all apart from the one who died of an illness whose head ends up on the pole in the 'Confessions of a Mask' chapter.

"Of course, there were celebratory fires every November the Fifth right up to the present day, but these fires have probably still been burning for centuries because they simply would have been the Beltane fires, around about the autumn months. So there were all these traditions. There was the great fire of Northampton. We've had an awful lot of fires here and just seemed to me that there was something that resonated between this town and the element of fire.

"There's also the metaphorical fire of the human spirit, of human life which, seen in a kind of speeded up context of the 12 chapters in the *Voice of the Fire*, you can almost see human intellect, human culture, sort of starting. It's like a blaze that starts off very small in the first chapters, there's hardly any culture, there's hardly any language, there's hardly any intellect, it's a smoldering. By the last chapter ["Phipps Fire Escape"], it is a kind of semiotic inferno, an inferno of signals, where the culture is blazing like a forest fire all around us, where we've traveled a very long way from the first chapter, we've come a very long way by the last chapter where it's contemporary Northampton and there's brand names everywhere, there's modern life with all its yammering details.

"The amount of information humans have is kind of reaching a boiling. That history is a kind of a heat as I think I say in the last chapter, information has been warming our culture. I suppose that *Voice of the Fire* is an attempt to plot the trajectory of that gradual, cultural warming, from its first smolderings to that final blaze. That's as near as I can get to what the actual voice of the fire is. And it sounded like a cool title."

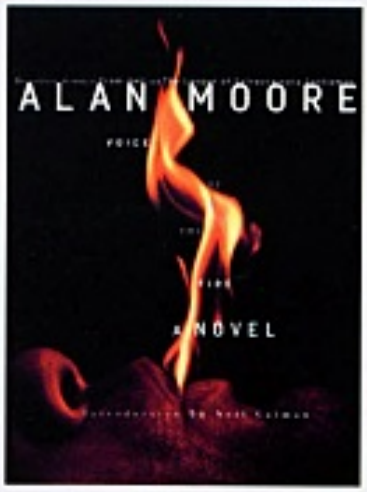
Moore began the novel around 1990, taking about five years to put it together and research it.

"I had a patient editor and she was more concerned with the fact that it was the sort of book that I wanted to write rather than getting done quickly. So I was able to let the book develop. Certain things only became evident after I wrote a few chapters. Like, I didn't realize that November was going to be such an important month. I didn't realize there were going to be quite so many severed heads. About halfway through writing it, this started to become quite alarming.

"The end of the book, the last chapter of this thing, if it was going to hang together as a novel, I was going to have to resolve all of these motifs that had been presenting themselves to me. There would have to be something in the ending that referred to severed heads, to black dogs and a lot of other little things that run through the other stories. Since I couldn't really make anything up without violating the restrictions that I placed upon myself that meant it was down to the town itself to write the last chapter for me. I knew that the last chapter would have to be written about what was happening in Northampton during the time that I was writing the last chapter, so if I didn't get any black dogs or severed heads during that period."

Moore was realistic in his expectations acknowledging that this conclusion "didn't seem very likely, frankly. We've never had a severed head to my knowledge," he laughs, "turning up in any news story in Northampton since I was born. There's plenty back 3- or 400 years ago but we've had a bit of a dearth of them lately." To say the town came through for him is an understatement. Reading the last chapter is like reading a summary of the book that has preceded it.

"That was the riskiest thing about my



strategy for writing *Voice of the Fire*. I could have gotten to that last chapter and if nothing had happened, I would have been left with an unsatisfying and unworkable novel. It would have been a collection of short stories that never really tied together, so I would perhaps have wasted about five years work and think about giving back the advance, so it was a high risk strategy. It seemed to be the way the book was going and I tried to listen to the book rather than listen to any plans I might have had. I generally find that's the best way to work: let the piece talk to you and tell you what it wants, and you follow that and you have trust in that process even if it's ridiculous trust. I mean, trusting the town to actually provide an ending for your unlikely story about black dogs and severed heads, I generally find that these things tend to work out.

"In some ways, *Voice of the Fire* was a kind of magic act at least in the terms that I understand magic, because magic and writing, there's not a great deal different between them. Perhaps I didn't realize when I started the book, which was actually some years before I became a magician, by the time I finished the book I found that I was pretty much in the same position as the scary, long-haired witchdoctor in the first chapter. I've written a chapter about this strange local shaman who's trying to fix the identity of the place in which he lives with a song line. By the end of the book, in the last chapter, I realized that was actually what I'd become; I was the local Northampton shaman and that I was attempting to fix the identity of my town in words, in memorable words, that would add dimension to the town for people who were living there or were visiting there; that they'd be able to see the place as I see it, they'd be able to see it with all it's fantastic unlikely history intact. There was a certain kind of symmetry unintentional when I'd written that first chapter, I'd no idea that I was going to go mad three years later and become a magician," Moore laughs. "It's funny how things work out."

With all the thought and detail Moore puts into his work, that much and more is going into his retirement. But this is not a man who is going to sit back and relax or even disappear. "No, I don't think so. I'm using the word in a very qualified sense.

"I'm still going to be working," Moore says matter-of-factly. "As to what on, I've got no idea and that is part of the pleasure. The main thing that I'm trying to get away from is constant deadlines. What I think I need at this juncture in my life is far more instability and insecurity, really," Moore says. "I just don't want to know what I'm going to be doing. It will probably be not entirely unconnected with magic, that is still an overriding concern of mine. It's something I would like to devote more time to. Magic, for me, tends to mean something that has a creative outcome. I'll still be doing things, things will still be coming out, they might not be things that anybody's got any interest in apart from me, but that's part of the freedom that I want, as well. I'm moving away from mainstream comics because I don't really want to be concerned about whether these things are going to commercial propositions or not. I just want to see what it is that I want to do when I don't have to do anything. To try and get back into the relationship that I have with art and writing before I started doing all this for a living and lost my hobby, to get back to that primal state, of a blank piece of paper and you can do anything in the world."

Of the many things his retirement will produce are two new books, from Top Shelf, that have been in the works for some time. *Lost Girls*, with artist Melinda Gebbie, a fully-painted graphic novel series that probes the art of pornography through the erotic nature of storybook characters. Out in December, *Mirror of Love*, with photographic art by José Villarrubia, is an epic poem chronicling the history and influence of gay culture, a project that Moore first introduced in Britain 14 years ago.

"*Lost Girls* is coming out after my official retirement but it's by no means an afterthought. In terms of graphic novels, I would personally rate it up there with *From Hell* and *Watchmen*, in terms of its importance. I know people who have seen the first couple of issues of it, but I've had the privilege of seeing all of it and I can see what the whole work is going to be like and there simply isn't a precedent for it either in comics or in the much wider world of erotica. There's not been anything like this that's been done before. It's a completely new animal. Even though there's bits of it that people will find familiar, they're stitched together in an unusual way. I'd be very interested to see what the reaction to

"I DIDN'T REALIZE THERE WERE GOING TO BE QUITE SO MANY SEVERED HEADS."

FROM "THE MIRROR OF LOVE"
ALL OTHER ART FROM "THE VOICE OF THE FIRE"

"I JUST WANT TO SEE WHAT IT IS THAT I WANT TO DO WHEN I DON'T HAVE TO DO ANYTHING"

this is. It will probably entail me and Melinda being burned at the stake, at least if Northampton's history of these things is anything to go on.

"*Mirror of Love*, that's something, especially with José's pictures, I'm very much looking forward to seeing the reaction on as well. It sort of struck me that that was a good poem and at the time it was written, it was the only thing of its kind in existence. There simply wasn't a cultural overview on gay culture that I was able to refer to when I was writing that. I think it was an important piece at the time and I don't think it's become less important over the past 10-15 years."

Mirror of Love isn't what Moore fans may be used to, poetry not being the most mainstream of readable work, but it's an expression in art that the writer appreciates. "It's something that I like. A lot of the stuff that I write is comic book dialogue, dialogue has its own demands. I do quite like to sort of get a bit epic. It's nice, it's kind of pure writing, it's when you can just immerse yourself in the language and let the language take you where it wants to. That lyrical quality, I like it, it's something you can't do all the time in some places. It would be completely inappropriate but when I get the chance, it's nice to be a bit grand and operatic every once in a while.

"I'm just going to retire from the hubbub of the mainstream, perhaps kind of keep my head down. There's been a lot of attention this year, a lot of it which has been very spurious kind of connected with the *League of Extraordinary Gentlemen* film or whatever so I'd like to sort of have a bit of a low profile for a couple of years, just go underground and all the rest of it. That'll be fun. That's the plan anyway. I hope so. I'm committed. So, the *Mirror of Love* is something I'm looking forward to and like I say *Lost Girls* particularly is something looming very big upon my horizons from next year. It's not going to be a quiet time, there's going to be plenty of things to occupy me, I think, even if I've put all the caped crusaders behind me for the time being."

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CREATURE TECH
WRITER/ARITST: DOUG TENNAPEL
PUBLISHER: TOP SHELF (WWW.TOPSHELFCOMIX.COM)

Most indy comics these days leave you at best with a ho-hum feeling and at worst with a realization that you've just wasted part of your life. But *Creature Tech* by *Earthworm Jim* creator Doug TenNapel actually leaves you smiling!

Dr. Michael Ong returns to his rural hometown to run a research facility known as "Creature Tech" – a sort of clearing house of the unexplained. Once there, he uncovers the Shroud of Turin, allowing a 150 year-old ghost to resurrect himself and continue his mad-scientist scheme involving giant space eels and demonic cats! Better still, Dr. Ong gets help from a CIA-trained giant mantis named Blue, monster truck-loving rednecks, and a symbiotic alien that attaches to his chest.

If *Creature Tech* were merely giant space eels it would be a fun read. But TenNapel is too talented to create a story simply driven by plot. His characters are fully realized beings; people you may not know but will certainly recognize.

From feelings of alienation to summer church picnics, from awkward first dates to true look-beyond-the-surface love, you're taken on a genuine, heartfelt rollercoaster ride of self-discovery. Plus, THERE ARE GIANT SPACE EELS! Admit it, you're smiling already. - JB

LAST OF THE INDEPENDENTS
WRITER: MATT FRACTION
ARTIST: KIERON DWYER
PUBLISHER: AIT/PLANETLAR (WWW.PLANETLAR.COM)

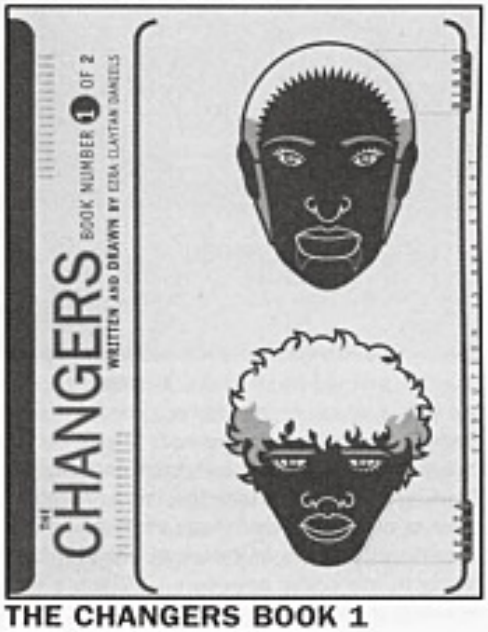
As an original graphic novel, *Last of the Independents* shines as an example of what is possible: from the down-home characters, to the tan-toned look, to the landscape format. Though LOTI is filled with clichés, like the big, dumb and insanely strong man-child, to the grizzled old guy who's seen his share of trouble, to the cute young thing who loves him unconditionally, this bank robbery-gone-wrong tale gives you enough and more to hang on to. You envision these characters going off the cliff Butch & Sundance style, but you want them to make it over the next ridge, out of range for the local cops, and away from the gangsters also on their trail. The book has enough explosions to please the most diehard movie fans, but enough warmth (puppies included) to melt those who long ago gave up on the illustrated medium.

Fraction's journey from Internet gadfly to professional comics writer is a successful one, with his spirited wit and an ear for dialogue leading him along. Dwyer's talent has brought superheroes to life for years now, but his turn at car chases, horse races, Ferris wheels and more human emoting than seen in a normal monthly is inspiring. Each page turn sends the reader into heated anticipation and into a moment of joy when the new page is reached. –MM

THREE STRIKES
WRITERS: NUNZIO DEFILIPPIS & CHRISTINA WEIR
ART: BRIAN HURTT
PUBLISHER: ONI PRESS (WWW.ONIPRESS.COM)

California's "Three Strikes" law seems just on the surface: commit two felonies and the next one will send you to jail for almost the rest of your life.

While tough-on-crime politicians trumpet the law as an effective deterrent, the reality though, as masterfully demonstrated in the Oni Press mini-series *Three Strikes* is radically different. Rey Quintana has a record. When he's arrested again, a politically motivated prosecutor uses technicalities in the strikes law to extend what should've been a two-year sentence to a 22-year one. Seeing no alternative, Rey reluctantly skips town. Defilippis and Weir, complimented by Hurtt's solid linework, deftly examine Rey's life on the run. They elevate the story beyond a clichéd chase into gripping human drama. Meanwhile, they run a parallel story of the bounty hunter on his trail, Noah Conway. Attempting to make-up to his daughter for a lifetime of shoddy parenting, he's forced to abandon her again to hunt Rey down. Together their stories weave a tapestry of the pain and loss suffered when people who seek to live their own lives get trapped within The System. –BA



THE CHANGERS BOOK 1
WRITER/ARTIST: EZRA CLAYTAN DANIELS
PUBLISHER: SELF-PUBLISHED
(WWW.DREAM-CHOCOLATE.COM)

Three million years in the future, humanity has reached the limit of its evolutionary

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potential due to the increasing use of and reliance on technology; the growth potential has been stunted. Willing to sacrifice their existence for the mere possibility of a greater evolutionary path the society of the future created Geaza and Bisso, the evolutionary catalysts. They have been sent back to the 21st century with this catalyst as part of their bodies to jump start human evolution.

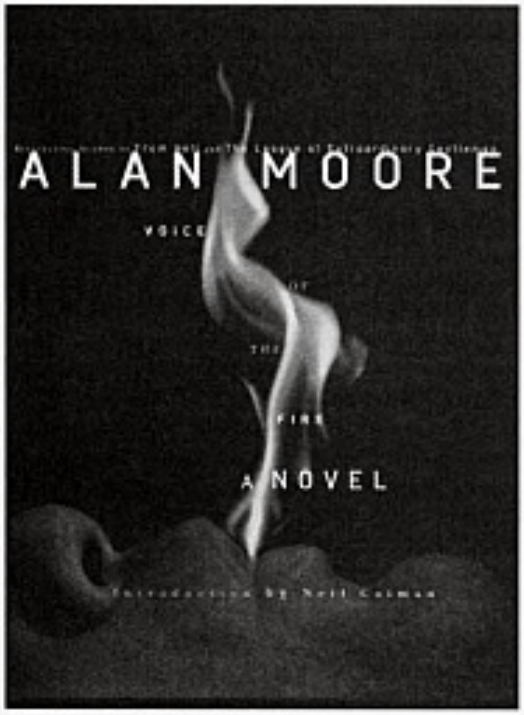
At first glance this book might seem to be very much a sci-fi book but its strength is that the actual science and technical issues take a back seat and we are faced with two superior beings from the far flung future who turn out to be surprisingly human.

Although Daniels' storytelling could be stronger the design and artwork of *The Changers* is unique and well done. Daniels' work shows much potential so keep an eye on him. –DK

LOVE EATS BRAINS!

WRITER/ARTIST: DASH SHAW
PUBLISHER: SELF-PUBLISHED (WWW.DASHSAW.COM)

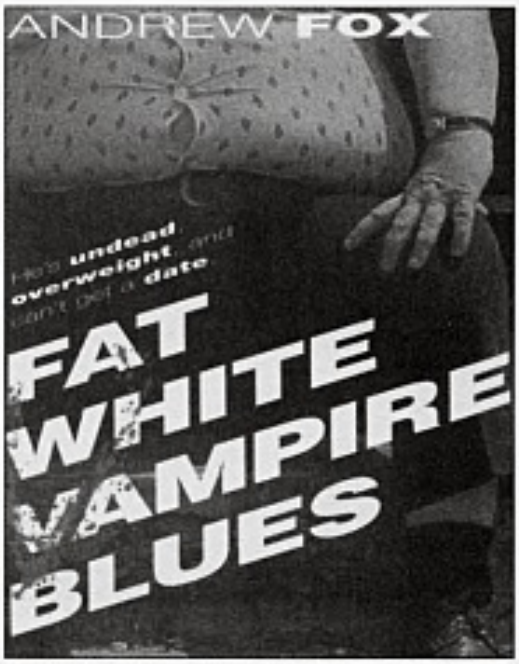
With the subtitle "A Zombie Romance" you'd expect a goofy horror story played for laughs. Instead Dash Shaw, a hidden gem of the indy comics scene, serves up *Love East Brains!* an intricately layered comic series determined to disturb, enlighten and amaze. Shaw employs every trick the medium has to offer in new and increasingly innovative ways in service to some of the most unique storytelling in any comic anywhere. William's in a malaise and his girlfriend's keeping him stuck in neutral. Enter Nachi, a half-Japanese comic artist hell-bent on blurring the lines between life and death, comfort and chaos. She pushes William to look for happiness beyond the accustomed boundaries he's set for himself, employing everything from steady doses of existentialism to video testimony of newly resurrected zombies from the local graveyard. We uncover moments in William's life (with his estranged father, with his disturbed mother, with his boring but well-meaning girlfriend) revealing the only true zombie in this series is William himself. Shaw's raw, edgy artwork gives life to a shattering message: our long denied personal truths lie not within but between and outside the panel borders of our own lives. It's there in the white noise where we are truly alive. –BA



VOICE OF THE FIRE

WRITER: ALAN MOORE
PHOTOGRAPHS: JOSÉ VILLARUBIA
PUBLISHER: TOP SHELF (WWW.TOPSHELFCOMIX.COM)

If you can get through the first chapter of Moore's novel, great. If not, skip it and move on to the second chapter. Even the author himself isn't surprised if you can't make it through the first person/present tense, 500 different word story. Consider it a challenge though, and the reward you get from reading the whole thing is that almost all the themes and motifs that reoccur throughout this unique story of Northampton (UK) are set up in there, and when they appear again, you can put them in context. Mind you, this is not *Watchmen* or *Top Ten*, this is a fully realized novel, with details you need to absorb and characters you may question, loathe or love, and with real history intertwined within the original premise. And by the end, you may just hear the voice of the fire and what it's saying to you. –MM



FAT WHITE VAMPIRE BLUES

ANDREW FOX
BALLANTINE BOOKS (WWW.BALLANTINEBOOKS.COM)

Though New Orleans has become the normal residence for vampires in books these days, Fox twists the legend making main character Jules Duchon much more of a stereotypical resident, 450 pounds of vampire flab, due to his penchant for imbibing the rich, fatty blood of locals.

But it's all those previous vampire books that allow you to get annoyed with Jules' ignorance and refusal to change—he still lives at his mother's home, and holds dear the old days, when he used to play superhero on the docks during World War II.

When a young black vampire rises up and threatens Jules in his own home, things *must* change, and change fast. But the obese vampire's head is as thick as his waist and only when he starts to lose friends does he turn himself around completely.

At first pass, none of the characters are ones you want to root for; Jules stubborness isn't quaint, it's frustrating. But as his past rises up to help him, he becomes endearing. And as he makes the moves to make some serious changes in his undead life, you're on his side, with a full Hurricane glass, jazz blasting on the radio, and that French Quarter feeling running through your veins. –MM

TSUI HARK'S VAMPIRE HUNTERS

Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment
DVD

The translation of the vampire myth throughout the world is fascinating. Vampires come in all shapes and sizes, can do different tricks, but the fundamentals are the same: they are life-sucking, undead creatures.

In *Tsui Hark's Vampire Hunters*, traditional movie martial arts are used for vampire and zombie hunting (for zombies become vampires, but zombies can be cured, and vampires can't). The young warriors are named for weather-related elements (as the elements are always powerful in Chinese films) and Rain, Lightning, Thunder and Wind follow the vampire compass to a quiet home where they are taken on as the help.

This is a much more convoluted way of describing the story. It's pretty straight forward, giving viewers what they expect in martial arts movies – challenges, battles, the older highly skilled master taking on the young punk who thinks he's better – but the added horror element transforms the setting to one of constant danger: if it's not the vampires you're watching out for, it's the zombies. And then you come up on a room full of wax people, and it ain't Madame Tussaud's.

All in all, *Vampire Hunters* isn't the best martial arts movie, nor is it the best vampire movie, but for what it is – a vampire-zombie-martial arts flick, with old scores to settle, young romance found and almost lost, and wax people – it's pretty damn good. –MM

HELLSING

GONZO STUDIOS
DVD

Based on the manga by Kouta Hirano, *Hellsing* is a unique anime series brought to you by Gonzo Studios (*Blue Submarine No.6*, *Full Metal Panic*, *LastExile*). The story is set in present day England where artificial vampires and their ghoulish servants are terrorizing the night. Unable to cope with creatures of the undead the government calls in the top secret organization called Hellsing. Although much of the Hellsing organization is made up of special forces type soldiers, they have one trump card up their sleeve: the premier vampire, Alucard. (Try his name backwards.) Alucard is one badass vampire with a savage taste for battle but he is also a tamed vampire in the service of Sir Integra Wingates Hellsing, the Organization's leader. The series explores an interesting take on the master and servant relationship and the idea of using

evil to fight evil.

To quote Alucard: "Go to hell and lick the devil's ass!" How can you not love a line like that? –DK

UNDERWORLD

SONY

It's an ancient tale: girl meets boy, they fall in love, their families hate each other, chaos ensues.

These families, though, have been fighting for centuries, blood and fur, teeth bared.

Last month's release of *Underworld* brought to the big screen a meeting commonly seen in the pages of comics and role-playing, the battle of the imperial vampires vs. the down-and-dirty werewolves.

A gun-fest in the style of *The Matrix*, *Underworld* is a hyper-action movie, starring

Kate Beckinsale (*Pearl Harbor*) as the gun-toting vampire and Scott Speedman (*Felicity*) as her lycanthropic love.

This year's deluge of horror films was surprising. What was more surprising was their success. Big blockbusters faired poorly this year, comics movies made their stand but gave in to the smaller films, and horror once more showed its chops. Once, traditional B-movie fodder, horror has moved forward into the realm of money makers. And *Underworld*, an action movie that takes place on an ancient battlefield in a modern venue, will have fans wondering why no one ever brought it to the screen before. –MM

HORROR FLICKS OF NOTE

ALL RELEASE DATES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Bubba Ho-Tep: As much a "mummy attacks" movie as anything, *Bubba Ho-Tep* also brings the sadness of old-age home life to the surface. Of course, Bruce Campbell (*Evil Dead*) as an aged Elvis, and Ossie Davis (*Do The Right Thing*) as Jack Kennedy bring a certain silliness to the fore, but expect much more.
(*Sept 26 expected release*)

The House of the Dead: Based on the video game of the same name. Not of the highest caliber, but a fun, bloody romp on a deserted island. Blood, guts, breasts and cheesy fighting: what more could you want?
(*Oct 10 expected release*)

The Texas Chainsaw Massacre: There are

many films that crave updating. *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*, as classic a gore-fest as you could get, probably isn't one of them. But a young, hot cast can make the difference in a market dominated by WB viewers, and for that reason alone, the new *Chainsaw Massacre* will make its mark.
(*Oct 17 expected release*)

Alien: The 25th anniversary re-release. Not a remake. Not a redo. The original. It's still true – in space, no one can hear you scream.
(*Oct 31 expected release*)

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NEWBLOOD

OFFERINGS I CAN'T WAIT TO SINK MY TEETH INTO

The success of horror films this past year has surprised most pundits, but the rise of horror comics is something that should make heads spin. It's a Happy Halloween as comics relish their own malleability, horror once again comes to the fore.

Writers Jim Catapano and Patrick Keller take a walk down the dark and creaky staircase into the abyss bringing back with them some of today's newest horror offerings. Check with your retailer on availability, but most of these books come out this month.

THE VAMPIRE'S CHRISTMAS

The Christmas season gets a peculiar kick-off by writer/illustrator Joseph Michael Linsner in *The Vampire's Christmas*, a 48-page graphic novel from Image Comics.

Linsner describes his book as "the tale of one desperate vampire trying to score some blood on Christmas Eve. He encounters Goth chicks, pedophiles, junkies, and the scariest of them all, holiday shoppers. Everyone in New York is hustling for the last minute score, and Esque the Vampire is caught up in the middle of it all."

The vampire Esque first appeared in *Cry For Dawn*, the artist's 1992 black-and-white horror anthology. "He is very much my anti-vampire vampire," notes Linsner. "He has no fangs, looks bad and smells bad. He is my response to the sappy romance that goes with most vampire stories."

As to the question of why horror and why now, Linsner is contemplative. "Maybe our present political climate has something to do with it. Horror is an escapist genre, and whenever real life gets scary, people tend to seek out fiction that will take them away from their day-to-day lives. I suppose that the public's interest in horror waxes and wanes, but the deep desire to confront fear and dread is a basic part of the human psyche. People will always love a good scare."–PK

CRUSH

"There are many different types of monsters in this world, and today I have changed into the worst kind of all: an adult."
—Liz Mason, Crush #1

Available this Fall from Dark Horse's new Rocket Comics line is *Crush*, the story of a girl named Elizabeth and the monsters in her life—including the one that lurks within her. Written by Jason Hall and illustrated by Sean Murphy, 18-year-old Elizabeth Mason has to contend not only with becoming an adult, but also turning into a creature named Crush. Along the way she deals with an assortment of terrors based in reality, including the abuse of her parents and the rejection of her peers.

According to Hall, Crush's roller-coaster combination of terror and angst should be very appealing to a young audience: "While it has its ample share of adventure, romance, humor and suspense, it also has a somewhat more introspective and moodier side to it as well."–JC

SWORD OF DRACULA

Jason Henderson brings us the bi-monthly *Sword of Dracula*. The first issue will be fresh from the presses this October from Image Comics, just in time for Halloween. "*Sword of Dracula* is Dracula like you've never seen him before — 600 years old and powerful, capable of using blood to build almost whatever he wants, intent on ruling the earth and locked in combat with a military that wants to hunt him down," Henderson explains. "And just as Ronnie Van Helsing, the woman who runs the vampire-hunting spy organization The Polidorium, is closing in on the Lord of the Vampires, a bigger threat arrives that throws the two parties together.

"For this project, my partner [artist] Greg Scott and I said, let's do everything that no one expects," Henderson says. "The good guys aren't in New York, they're in Colorado, and let's have snowmobiles and Humvees and coagulant weapons and hard-core anime-influenced blood powers. These new powers

LAWYERS AND THE MONSTERS THEY PROTECT

"Beware the Creatures of the Night—They Have Lawyers."

So reads the cover blurb of *Supernatural Law*, one of the more original works that has thrived in the renaissance of the horror genre. Those lawyers are Alanna Wolff and Jeff Byrd, who are dedicated to protecting the rights of any witch, vampire or mad sorcerer that darkens their office door.

"*Supernatural Law* takes a straight-faced satirical look at the law by way of horror, lovingly spoofing the conventions of the genre while poking fun at the legal system," says creator Batton Lash.

The series has actually been around for a long time in different formats. Lash's series began life in 1979 as *Wolff & Byrd, Counselors of the Macabre*, a comic strip in a small New York paper. It moved to the *National Law Journal* in 1983, and took its current form as a bi-month-

are meant to be amazing the same way people were amazed by Dracula climbing walls in the novel.

"Horror has an astonishing amount of variety," the writer notes. "At the same time that I'm doing *Sword of Dracula*, I'm also doing *Soulcatcher* for Moonstone, and it's a sad, creepy ghost story. People love horror because it's about becoming aware of a great world beyond, the *mas alla* – but the story can spin out in many different ways."–PK

DEVIL'S FOOTPRINTS

A recent successful entry in the horror revival is *The Devil's Footprints*, a four-part miniseries published by Dark Horse Comics. Written by Scott Allie and featuring art by Paul Lee and Brian Horton, the series brings classic Lovecraftian terror to a modern setting and mindset. Set in Allie's hometown of Ipswitch, MA, *Devil's Footprints* focuses on Brandon Waite, a young man forced to carry on his late father's sorcery to save his dying family.

"I initially got the idea to do a story about a magician who wants to perform the ultimate magic trick–turn himself into a better person," says Allie. "What I discovered was that most of this traditional magic was about making oneself a better person. So I realized I could do the story I wanted to do, and make it a sincere story about people and about magic."

Though there are plenty of demons and monsters about, Allie says that at its heart *Devil's Footprints* is more about real-life fears: "At the core of it all was a look at what I think is a sort of common fear among men about becoming their fathers. It's sad that way too many of us would find that to be a terrible fate, but it seems to be fairly common."–JC

CVO

From IDW comes *CVO: Covert Vampiric Operations*, written by Jeff Mariotte and illustrated by Gabriel Hernandez. Creator and cover artist Alex Garner introduces the story as "a covert organization of vampire secret agents created by the US government to combat the greatest threats to its national security. It's *Mission: Impossible* with vampires. CVO is an integration of the ancient, supernatural world and the one we live in today."

Garner is also pleased about the other place *CVO* will be invading. "We had conversations and meetings with Konami and they found *CVO* to fit very well with their ideas of what a quality video game should be about. They liked the intricate details of the *CVO* universe, which included detailed histories and mythologies regarding a large variety of creatures and weaponry."

As to the recent success of the horror genre, Garner points to one comic in particular as a place to look. "Horror stories, and stories about scary things, have always been popular. In the world of comics, *30 Days of Night* [by Steve Niles & Ben Templesmith] really got people excited because it's a really well done horror story."–PK

WALKING DEAD

The incomparable Robert Kirkman, brings forth the horror of Image Comics' *Walking Dead*. He explains, "*Walking Dead* is a sprawling, epic, survivalist adventure with zombies thrown in for good measure. It focuses on the life and times of Rick Grimes, small town cop, and how he deals with living in the world after a zombie apocalypse. It's a real pick me up."

Kirkman speculates that horror's making a comeback because "it's just time. It comes in waves. The '80s are out and zombies are it! There haven't been any horror comics in a while and I guess somebody noticed. There's a big push these days to diversify the industry and all that. This is just the next step."

The writer, horror infusion notwithstanding, is excited about his new project. "This book is going to be a real treat to longtime readers, as they will get to watch all the layers unfold. So, make sure you start with the first issue."
–PK

ly book when Lash and wife Jackie Estrada founded Exhibit A Press in 1994. The book became known as *Supernatural Law* beginning with its 24th issue in 1999.

The (formerly) titular legal experts provide the supernatural community with the representation that has eluded it for so long.

"Alanna Wolff and her partner Jeff Byrd, aided by their secretary, Mavis, take on all cases that involve the supernatural and the supernaturally afflicted," says Lash.

"Whether it's a witch sued for 'hexual' harassment or a vampire with a personal injury suit at stake, Wolff & Byrd are there to see that the things that go bump in the night get their day in court."

To the uninitiated, the terror of the macabre coupled with the horrors of the legal system may sound like a dark read, but Lash rarely lets this occur, crafting situations both surreal and fun. In fact, most issues feature an homage to other noted SF and Fantasy works. The Exhibit A website includes a guide to each issue, allowing new readers to find a good place to start.

"Despite the horror/legal angle, I always try to keep Supernatural Law lighthearted and accessible," says Lash. "I'd like a new reader to enjoy each issue on its own merit."

Issue 38, released in August, featured a (literally) disappearing client and a pinup by award-winning artist Ron Kasman. The next installment is forthcoming in December, and will feature, according to Lash, "In great horror tradition, a sequel to the story of the client in #35 and it's titled 'Appeal of the 800 lb. Gorilla'. Plus, there's a second story about a werewolf whose father is chagrined that his boy is not as scary as he should be... especially since he's up on charges!"

Exhibit A has several trade paperbacks that collect the individual issues. These include *Sonovawitch!*, *The Vampire Brat*, and most recently, *Mr. Negativity and Other Tales of Supernatural Law*, which collects issues 31-37 plus *Mavis* #3. All can be ordered directly from Exhibit A at *exhibitapress.com*. – *Jim Catapano*

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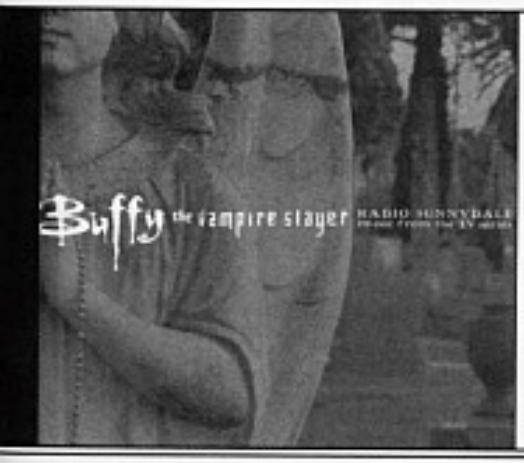
HELL'S BELLS

MUSIC SOOTHES THE SAVAGE BEAST



BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER

RADIO SUNNYDALE – MUSIC FROM THE TELEVISION SERIES
VIRGIN RECORDS

"Radio Sunnydale" kicks off with a Breeders cover of the popular theme song raring and ripping through your speakers, jumping into Joey Ramone's to-the-point song, "Stop Thinking About it." Each track reminding the listener of those scenes, those moments that hit home, the tears in the characters eyes, the longing, the wanting, of a lost love, for everything to be over, for victory, for the dead to come back to life.

The original score music of "The Final Fight" is enough to send anyone into tears as those last moments are relived. And, honestly, it's just a nice piece of music.

While, yes, any die-hard fan is sure to grab this CD, the musical mix – Joey Ramone, The Dandy Warhols, Lunatic Calm, Aimee Mann, Blur and others – is the music you like, but never hear enough of, all together on one CD, making Radio Sunnydale perfect for long rainy drives, quiet afternoons, and making moments of your own. –Maureen McTigue

IRON MAIDEN

"DANCE OF DEATH"
COLUMBIA RECORDS/WWW.IRONMAIDEN.COM

As always Maiden is pushing forward, changing the face of Heavy Metal. "Dance of Death," a much darker album than before, is full of tasteful riffs, catchy hooks, unison guitars, and lead breaks. The opening track "Wildest Dreams" is kind of a modern "Wasted Years". And the second track "Rainmaker" introduces a new sound, yet so familiar, featuring a blistering solo from Dave Murray. The band increases the power and voltage on "No More Lies," the strongest track off the album. Bruce Dickinson's air raid siren screams are at full throttle, as are the solos from guitarists, Janick Gers and Adrian Smith, complementing each other. The band has begun to use the three-guitar assault in a very effective way. The most compelling track has to be "Age of Innocence," perfectly describing the lives of the human race as we see it today, such as the disappearing qualities and value of life.

This is not an Iron Maiden album of the old, but the new, as it should be. Heavy metal should evolve through the years, and that is exactly what Maiden has accomplished. –Yoichiro Yoda

INHUMAN

THE NEW NIGHTMARE
A-F RECORDS/WWW.INHUMANLEGION.COM

In a land of corporate cookie cutter pop stars, the hidden indy talent of local groups often gets overlooked. It's in this uncharted No Man's Land where we find Inhuman, there in the bowels of Brooklyn, NY. There's a B-horror movie feel to the tracks, two in fact celebrating the vampiric ("Eternal" and "Bloodlust"), both songs deepening the dusty cry of lead singer Michael Scondotto. Though both "Killing Time" and "Life is Miserable" provide a platform to show a range for the singer away from the more natural "metal yell."

The music itself is solid, with each band member given a chance to push forward. The instrumental "Nightmare," written by drummer Steve Gallo and guitarist Joseph James, gives them that opportunity, as well as bassist Hank Hell.

It might not be groundbreaking work, but you can feel its power and anger, and sometimes that's all you need. –Sage Enwright

MAROON5

SONGS ABOUT JANE
OCTONE RECORDS/WWW.MAROON5.COM

The release of the track "Harder to Breathe" shot Maroon5 across radio play lists for the summer. The catchy single, with a few background vocal riffs reminiscent of Foreigner's "Double Vision," a phrase within the song itself brought the band new interest and deservedly so.

A strong mix of influences on the group, playing around with rock, pop, R&B and funk infiltrate each track, elevating the music from potential pop wasteland to earful rhythms.

There's a very familiar feel to "Songs About Jane," that makes you wonder what each song reminds you of, not of moments, but of other bands, older songs that the deep recesses of your brain held on to. At times, there's a bit of a Jamiroqui flashback, only no big hats.

And it's not that any of this is bad. Maroon5 blends well into a day, with some soothing background lyrics that will hit you when you least expect it. –PJ Rizzo

VAMPIRELLA
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VAMPIRELLA: MO' MONEY, MO' BULLETS
BY STUART MOORE & JOHN LUCAS
GIANT ROBOT WARRIORS
EXTENSIVE PREVIEW BY STUART MOORE & RYAN KELLEY
AND MUCH MORE!
Main cover art by
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SINK YOUR TEETH INTO IT THIS NOVEMBER!

MOBSTER MASH

MARK WHEATLEY, THE INNOCENCE OF CREATION AND LIVING IN THE DEAD END

By Maureen McTigue | Art by Mark Wheatley

"THE ORIGINAL GERM OF THE IDEA WAS A PUN," explains Mark Wheatley about the creation of his particular monster. "I thought, 'Frankenstein Mobster, that's cute.' And it was one of those ideas that just stuck and eventually you're at the control of your pun. I had to develop it, I had to find out why there was a Frankenstein Mobster. Kind of like looking at clouds and saying 'There's a horsy!' only it's a lot easier to look at the clouds."

As one of the newest titles to hit comics stands this fall, *Frankenstein Mobster* certainly seems to have one of the most original themes. Taking a cue from classic horror

movies and gangster flicks, Mark Wheatley pulled together a whole new world of monsters, mayhem, Tommy guns and trouble.

What seems like an easy jump, from a gag line to a fully fleshed out comic story was anything but easy. It certainly percolated for a long time.

"I started it originally as parts of something called the Lightning Line which was a line of comics I developed in the beginning of the 1990s. At the time it was planned to be part of the line and was only slightly developed and Marc Hempel was going to be the artist but a lot of those things went on the back burner and a lot of those characters have been on our website, the Sunny Fundays (insightstudiosgroup.com), like Doctor Cyborg and The Body came from that. It was originally planned that Frankenstein Mobster would join them as a daily strip online and that was around 1996-97, and I got 13 weeks of dailies done when the publishing we were doing just went through the roof and started taking all my time and I became the businessman and administrator and had no time for my comics. I never even launched it. I couldn't finish the story."

As business for Insight Studios – created by Wheatley and good friend, artist Marc Hempel in 1980 – grew, comics creation took a secondary roll. Wheatley wrote for Danish television, produced art books, wrote Tarzan comics, all the while Frankie and the gang sat in the back of his brain. But when the muse beckons, you listen.

"It all seems to fall into place," Wheatley says of starting up again. "Nothing like a decade of development to let it just roll off the tongue. It's transformed so much since then, you'd recognize it but it's fleshed out. I understand the characters better now. I understand the city so much better, all the supporting cast I know intimately. What's surprising to me is that I no longer have to work to come up with this stuff, all I have to do is say, 'Here's the situation, Frankie, how are you going to deal with it?' and he tells me."

The book – a bi-monthly continuing series beginning this month from Image Comics ("I'm an absolute fool announcing an ongoing comic book series") tells the tale of the mysterious Frankenstein Mobster, a creature pieced together from what's left of one good cop and his eternal desire to do the right thing, but he is "haunted" by the spirits of three bad guys who have made a home in Frankie's head. Their world, Monstros City, is a unique place where one would think that monsters could make their home, only the monsters that do live there – actual vampires, mummies, trolls, giants and more – are treated as less than second-class citizens and live in a section of town called the Dead End. It is here where the story of Frankenstein Mobster both ends and begins.

The story that unveils over the first eight issues, beginning with October's #0, started life as a feature film script, for no other reason than that's what Wheatley had written.

When he was in San Diego at Comic-Con International a while ago, he had 13 online strips of *Frankenstein Mobster* printed out in a binder to show to fellow artists to prove "'See?! I did do some art this year!'" Wheatley laughs. "And some guy grabbed it and went through it, and he said, 'This looks great! Has anyone taken the option on it yet. Hi, I'm from Jerry Bruckheimer productions.' Ok, great," Wheatley laughs. "Anyway, they wanted to turn it into a movie and I was like 'Um, well, maybe, ok.' Well, I didn't know what it was to me, it was still so new. I talked to guys throughout the [comics] industry who said, 'Well, if you sell it now, you'll make money but you'll never know what it was.

"IT COMES FROM EMOTIONAL RESPONSES, IT'S ALL METAPHOR AND ANALOGY. IF IT DOESN'T RING TRUE, I DON'T FORCE IT."

DOWN DEAD END

VAMPIRELLA PAYS A VISIT TO THE FRANKENSTEIN MOBSTER

I COULD HEAR THE IRON GATE SQUEAK. That's topside in the graveyard. That's why I never oil it. Makes a perfect early warning system. So I knew someone was coming. The click of boot heels on granite came next.

Clik clak clak, down the steps. Whoever this was knew where to look for me. And there's not many of the living who know I make this crypt a home. The footsteps were getting closer. They were crossing the lab.

Then the door to my office opened, and a shadow sauntered in. Only this shadow had curves, legs up to there, and eyes that glowed like emeralds.

The misty memory shook me, but in a good, warm way. I swallowed hard and said, "Hiya, V. Long time, no see."

VAMPIRELLA, YOU'RE A NEW FACE
MOST MEN DON'T LOOK AT MY FACE.
BUT YEAH— I'M NEW IN TOWN.
I CAME LOOKING FOR A SAFE HAVEN FOR PEOPLE LIKE ME.
A PLACE WHERE VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES AND THE OCCASIONAL MONSTER MASH COULD FIND SOME ACCEPTANCE.
IN MONSTROS CITY?!!!

The shadow glided into the light and Vampirella took the chair in front of my desk. The view was a good one. "Hi Frankie. How's tricks?"

"Same old, same old. You've been to Monstros City, you know the deal."

"Indeed, I do." Her eyes twinkled with mischief and knowledge, and she leaned forward. I leaned back, more outta response to her choppers. Those vampire teeth get to me when wrapped up by lips like that.

"This ain't a social call, is it?" I settled in more comfortably, taking in the sights, knowing that she didn't mind. I might have died, but I'm not dead. If you know what I mean.

"Not exactly. I... you mind if I ask you some questions? Just for my own curiosity?" She leaned back. Ah, I love this part of the job.

"Shoot." I smiled at my own joke, eyeing my Tommy gun...

For a full account of their discussion, go to www.vampirella.com. Enjoy these highlights:

They'll make it their own property and you won't get nearly as much money as you would if it were fully developed.' So I figure, I'm writing for television [Denmark's *Troll Tales*] at this point, why don't I just go ahead and write it up as a film script. Which is what I did. And that was a real education in story structure and once I had that, I decided that I could make a great series of comic books. Imagine that?! Don't know where that idea came from," he laughs.

"I have so many plots written now that I'd probably be busy up until 2012. but if I want to throw in some additional ingredients, it'll spin it out even longer. One of the things I want to do after my initial start is done that established everything, I want to go back and do short stories, since a lot of my plots are single issues. And it's kind of interesting, the Frankenstein Mobster that has been seen so far in the crossover with Vampirella on the online daily strips [which pushed hits on the Sunny Fundays site from 800-1200 daily hits to 17,000 all the way to 350,000 at the end of the story], the Frankenstein Mobster in that set up, the one that's in the back up story in *Hammer of The Gods* and the *Move Fund Comics* [a Comic Book Legal Defense Fund project], all these stories are the type of stories that will be taking place as of issue 8.

"I'm always coming up with the backstory but I know how to discipline it now," he laughs. "But you get that stuff, it just comes if you ask the right questions. I try to keep my fiction honest, if you know what I mean. It comes from emotional responses in me and translated experience, it's all metaphor and analogy and if it doesn't ring true to me, I don't follow it. I don't force it. I set the character up, I establish the conflict and I watch as they deal with it."

The book's look is inspired by a classic film, but not the one people would guess. "The art style came from *King Kong* . Not just the art style but I guess more of an emotional place, where I wanted it to be, kind of an adventurous spooky feel. And I know everyone expected *Frankenstein* but I didn't see that one [until recently, after the sequels].

"The artists who did the pre-production work of *King Kong*, Byron Crabbe and Mario Larrianaga, used a very soft pencil style. It was very atmospheric and I just fell in love with that and that's why I started using the pencil rendering; I wanted to get that atmosphere that you get in the old horror films and also that you get in gangster films That is something I warmed up to gradually when I realized it's not just a horror story.

"There's a stupid innocence about creation, at least for me. I don't always anticipate where I'm ending up with these things. I go, 'Hey, I have this character, Frankenstein Mobster' and people will say, 'I guess he'll be doing something with gangsters.' I hadn't gotten that idea yet. 'Well, I guess, it makes sense.' I was still working on the horror side.

"I eventually caught up with the gangster stuff and kind of got hooked on the old movies and have a nice collection of replica guns around the house, and I realized I was *more* into the gangsters. Sometimes I have to remind myself that that guy with the wrappings is a mummy because I'm thinking of him so much as a character; I've kind of lost track of the characters who are the monsters. I'm not really playing them as monsters. They're just unfortunately second-class citizens in a town that doesn't trust them."

"THERE'S A STUPID INNOCENCE ABOUT CREATION."

Wheatley is looking at well over 20 years in comics and not missing a beat. Two of his projects – *Hammer of the Gods* with Mike Oeming and *Breathtaker* with Hempel – have both been optioned, and *Frankenstein Mobster* is courting producers yet again. The studio he and Hempel created is still going strong, though now more electronic than physical, and it is lucrative, with popular art books and comics collections still being produced.

Mark Wheatley marvels at his life's work. "You know what's really fun? Getting up every day going, 'Oh boy, I get to draw more comics today.' Out of everything I've done in my life, and I've done quite a few things, I keep coming back. I just like drawing these things. I like telling stories. There's a lot of other things I like to do that would have gotten me in trouble. This has just been really great."

FRANKIE - So, why the hell are you in Monstros City?
VAMPIRELLA - Since my last visit, I just can't get this place out of my mind.
Could be you just missed me?
Sure. How could I resist after the wild time we had together? I can't get enough of being a moving target for mobsters.
I told you that they were shooting at me. You weren't

in town long enough to really piss 'em off.

The gang in "Dead End" they're good folks, why're they getting so much grief?
That one's not so hard. You could figure it out.
Looks to me like Monstros City is full of bigots!
Calling 'em bigots doesn't really tell the story though. Leaves out the history and the "why" of it all. See Monstros City has a history of spooks and goblins. Goes way back to pre-revolutionary days. Hell, Salem gets all the reputation for witches, but that's only because they killed theirs. Around here the magic crowd managed to play it smart and stayed alive. For example, the real name for the "Dead End" is Druid Hill. We had an organized league of Druids who helped settle Monstros.
The problems came from the pirates.
You had pirates? Monsters AND Pirates?
Yeah. Pretty colorful place, huh? Yeah. The folks of Hydes made a deal with the Pirates. Druid Hill and Hydes were big on shipping, the bay is a natural seaport. So Hydes decided to offer a pardon to any Pirates who would help form a navy and defend the harbor from the Yankee ships. The guy who was heading the Pirates at that time was Lucas Monstros. See where I'm going with this?
Reminds me of you for some reason.
With a smart mouth on you like that, how has that face stayed so pretty?

Look - you told me that you were a cop before you got sliced and diced?
Yeah. A big, stupid cop. I actually thought I could make a difference in this town. I tried to do right by folks, monsters included. And it got me killed. Make no mistake about it, In Monstros City the cops are just a junior branch of the Mobs.

Let's not get sidetracked again, Frankie. But - uh - Frankie isn't really your name. Is it?
They call me the Frankenstein Mobster.
That's not what I meant. I mean - your name before you were killed and brought back to life. The name of that cop. Word on the street is you were Terry Todd. Is that right?
Could be. Yeah.

LUNACHICKS

WHEN THE MOON IS FULL, AND A DUSTY FOG ROLLS ACROSS THE LAND, THEY RISE!

Since the early days of Vampirella, many women have gone out of their way to portray the bloody vixen. At conventions, on Halloween, for photo shoots, for the Hell of it – it's been done time and again, with and without the prodding of others.
Every month, you can meet one of these women who take their fandom to the next level. If you know of one, share. Send all packages to:

LUNACHICKS
Vampirella Comics Magazine
1115 Broadway 8th floor
New York, NY 10010

Diana Knight's a convention staple. She wears the scarlet proudly, while balancing her vampiric tendencies by portraying Wonder Woman, as well.
Take a moment and meet Diana.

VAMP MAG: *There are many ways that the various models have used to prevent slippage problems with the suit. Everything from glue sticks to duct tape. Do you have any secrets?*

DIANA KNIGHT: That's why my suit is made of leather. Leather can be molded, shaped, and tailored to fit the body exactly and it's stiffer than spandex, plus it's more fun to wear. But my main secret is called saline, and I'll leave it at that!

VM: *How long have you been doing conventions, and who have you portrayed?*

DK: I've been doing cons for about five years. I started going to San Diego looking for memorabilia and toys, then gradually fell into the biz when artist friends started asking me to model for them. I began working the cons about a year and a half ago. I'm known in the business as "that Wonder Woman model" because I've donned the costume for ACTOR (A Commitment To Our Roots), a charity benefiting Golden & Silver Age comic creators. I'd work the booth at cons in costume and ask for donations in exchange for photos with fans. It was such a big hit that I decided to keep up the tradition. It makes the fans so happy and keeps them coming back each day to see who you're going to be next. Although I've been portrayed as different characters in art, so far the "live action" versions to date are Wonder Woman and your favorite Drakulonian.

VM: *Other than the cons, is there any place else we may have seen you?*

DK: I'm the spokes model for the Las Vegas Fetish & Fantasy Halloween Ball. We do interview segments and PR here and there, sometimes it winds up on shows like "Wild On." Hell, I couldn't even tell ya. But, you've seen me in other comic & fantasy books. I was Wonder Woman in Dan Brereton'd *JLA: 7 Caskets*. I just started working with *Heavy Metal* cover artist Lorenzo Sperlonga, who also does covers for Avalanche Press. I'm on the cover of *Viking Age*, a gaming guide.

VM: *What is the strangest thing that a fan has asked you at a con?*

DK: Now, it wasn't strange to him, but I see a guy on the circuit who always wants to take photos with me choking him..

VM: *Do you have a web site that the fans can use to keep up with your career?*

DK: You bet! Anyone can visit me at www.dianaknight.com to see what I'm up to, and what I'm in to. My website is a strange mix of comics and fetish, plus a little glamour thrown in. There's a guest side as well as a members side for those who want to see my naughtier side!

Interview & Photos by Terry Sanders

SLAYER

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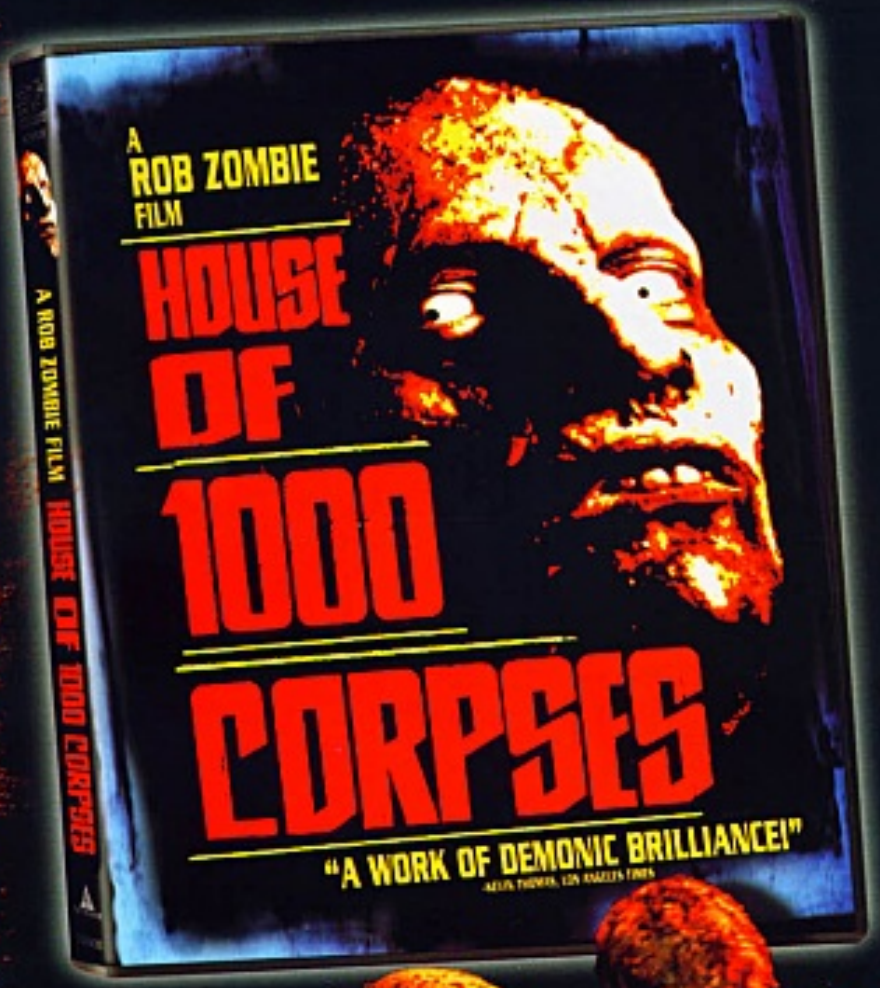

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